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WYCH-ELM

POEMS

BY
BELLE BREMER
(*M. SWAFFORD*)

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"Poetry is the blossom and the fragrance of all
human knowledge, human thought, human passions,
emotions, language."

COLERIDGE.

BUFFALO
CHARLES WELLS MOULTON
1891

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WYCH - ELM.

DAMASCUS.

SPHINX-LIKE she looks across the desert sands,
And views along the highway of the world
The passing centuries, and hears the tramp
Of tireless ages—Time's great caravan.
She broods upon the past like one who has
Outlived his time, his three-score years and ten;
For him the living are not, and the dead live;
The past is present, and the now is then.
One by one he has seen them pass away,
Companions of his youth and his old age,
Till all have gone their ways and he is left
Alone, Eidolon of another age.

Afar across the sands of Araby
The traveler sees a verdant plain arise
Like vision of enchantment. Shining towers,
Great domes and lofty minarets, white
As shifting sands bleached by the desert sun,
Uprear above the restless, great green sea
Of waving verdure. He hurries on
Through oleander thickets, white and pink,
Liquid with music spilled from feathered throat.
About him now the sleepy poppies nod
And splash his feet with crimson; over all,

Heavy and sweet, the breath of Damask rose.
He enters through the gloomy gate, when lo!
Like queen imperaled and robed in white simarre,
Damascus, mystic city of the East,
The ancient of cities, whose dim birth
Dates back to Uz and Aram! Four thousand years
The apricot upon her gray old wall
Has hung its blushing fruit. Four thousand years
Upon her streets has shone the Syrian moon.
Here caravans assemble as of old.
The camels come and go about the streets
Laden with spices, perfumes, silken stuffs,
And many a blade of bright Damascus steel,
As when in half-forgotten days she reigned
Proud Syria's capitol.

Fair Ephesus

She saw arise, a little village on the hills
Of Prion and Corressus; saw it grow
In strength and beauty till the gazing world
Looked on its fair proportions in amaze
While pilgrim devotees from every clime
Gathered to worship in great Dian's shrine.
And now within the silent chambers of the past,
Thick with the dust of ages, where old Time
Holds all his captives and his treasures, heaps
Of fallen empires, nations, cities, kings,
Faned Ephesus is lying; owls and bats
Her only tenants, o'er her mouldering stones
Stern silence broods and serpent lizards glide.

In her old age she saw the birth of Rome,
And saw her throned upon her seven hills,
The world's imperial mistress at whose frown

The kingdoms feared and trembled; she has seen
That proud and haughty head brought low,
Uncrowned, dishonored, from her cruel hands
The royal scepter taken, all her robes
Beneath the pitiless war-chariot wheels
Of conqueror, trailed in Roman dust.
Hoary with eld, world-worn, she was, when shone
Outside her city gates the wondrous light
That was not light of sun, nor moon, nor star,
Round Saul of Tarsus. Old when first was sown
The seed that bore the Mystic Passion Flower:
And through the lapsing cycles she has watched
That little scorned and persecuted plant,
Set 'mong the Judean lilies long ago,
Watered by blood and tears of martyrs slain
Grow to a goodly tree, whose branches spread
O'er all the earth, whose fragrant leaves are for
The nations' healing; underneath whose shade
The world aweary ones may come and rest.

The history of the world, its secrets and its great
events,
Are locked within her bosom; she has seen
A thousand empires born that have been dust
For Æons gone, and blown about the world.
Her white streets have echoed to the tread
Of tramping millions, whose gray bones
Now mat the earth as roots of grasses mat
The verdant hillsides. All the earth to her
Is but an Esdrælon full of bones.
She does not reckon time by years, but by
The leaden-footed ages; what to her
Are little puppet shows of years? She sees
The mighty drama of the centuries.

The strong destroyer, Time, who mocks at work
Of man and lays his towered cities low,
Who for his pastime topples over thrones,
And crumbles up the marble palaces of kings,
And writes in mockery o'er them, "They were,"
Before her white enchanted walls is stayed,
And touching her but gently leaves her there,
Methuselah of cities, fair and hale,
With length of years untold.

HESPERIDES.

WE read of a marvelous island fair—
 A charming story and quaintly told—
 And a wonderful garden lying there,
 Whose trees bear apples of yellow gold.
 It is said if you sail away, away,
 O'er the pulsing seas, to the shining west
 Steadily on, you will come some day,
 With favoring breeze, to the island blest.

But eye of mortal has never seen
 The mythic isle of the western seas,
 With its garden bright in the flashing sheen
 Of golden fruit on the magic trees;
 You may gaze, and gaze, where the cloud-lands pile
 Their sunset gold till your eyes are dim,
 You never will sight the Hesper isle,
 Though you sail to the ocean's farthest rim.

There's a wider sea in its ebb and flow,
 And ever its shifting waves are curled
 Round ships that sail and the ships below—
 The sea of Life, and it laps the world;
 And bright as a gem, in this circling sea,
 On a happy isle 'neath tropic skies,
 Where the crimson current is swift and free,
 A garden of golden fruitage lies.

But once, in sailing the wide sea o'er,
 We sight this beautiful wonder-land,

The garden of youth, with its precious store;
Once only our feet will touch the strand
Where the rosiest curtains ever drape
The windows of day with a shining mist,
And the bloom is still on the purple grape,
The blush on the peach the sun-god kissed.

But one brief day in the garden is ours
To have and hold till the sun goes down,
To eat of the fruit and pluck the flowers
And gather the clustering nuts of brown,
And the hours go by on wingèd feet,
Ah! never were hours so dear as these,
Where the golden fruit that we pluck and eat
Is sweet as honey from Hybla's bees.

Then the sun slips over the western wall,
The gold fades out of the twilight sky,
And darkly the evening shadows fall,
Our day is now with the things gone by,
And our boat is ready to sail, alas!
For down by the shore the boatman calls,
And so, with lingering steps, we pass
Forever outside the enchanted walls.

THE HAUNTED BATTLE-FIELD.

ALL the place is haunted;
In the moon's pale beams
Every wind-stirred thicket
Full of specters seems;
Here a bayonet glistens,
There a sabre gleams.

Sounds a ghostly bugle
Far away, and then
Comes a steady tramping,
As of marching men,
Up among the shadows
Of the haunted glen.

Yonder, down the valley
By that riven pine,
Where the ground was reddest
With the human wine,
Come the spectral columns
Wheeling into line.

See the ghostly gunners
Gathering around
Where the broken caissons
Moulder on the ground;
And again the cannon
Thunders from yon mound.

Now the storm of battle
Sweeps across the vale,—
Comes a heavy patter
As of leaden hail,
And the Southern pine-trees
Bend as in a gale.

Wavers there no column,
Infantry like rock
Stand with stern set faces,
To receive the shock
Of the charging squadrons
Seeming death to mock.

Rush the phantom horsemen
Like the wind, nor heed
Screaming shell and shrapnel,
Neigh of dying steed,
Prayer or imprecation,
Shriek of spirit freed.

But the charge is over,
All is still again:
Crimson dyes the grasses,
Like a bloody rain,
Where the ghastly reapers
Mowed that awful lane.

Ever in that valley
At the close of day
Come the warring shadows,
Shadows blue and gray,

Gathering in the moonlight
To the dreadful fray.

Shadowy lines are forming,
Marching to and fro,
Spectral drums are beaten,
Ghostly bugles blow,
Where was fought the battle
In the long ago.

THE EVENING SOUTH-WIND.

A FICKLE sprite and very bold, this rover of the
South,
His jasmine-scented breath is sweet, but passion-hot
his mouth.
He wantons 'mong the sleeping flowers, and with
his kiss that wooes,
The crimson petals of the rose, drop with the
evening dew.
He softly sighs to see it droop, but he has had his
bliss,
And there are other sweets for him, and other flow-
ers to kiss.
He ruffles up the tiny brook that slips among the
lands,
In little merry ripples low, that tinkle o'er the sands;
And shakes the lily's waxen cup with restless wings
that beat,
Until its rare perfume is spilled, and all the night is
sweet.
He rustles through the dry, dead leaves, he croons
among the pines,
And spies where honeysuckle hangs its trumpet
'mid the vines.
"Ah ha!" says he, "a hunter's horn within this
leafy screen,
By Æolus! I'll blow a blast will wake the Færie
Queene."
He rocks the brown bee in the rose safe housèd for
the night,

And gleefully he laughs to see the angry insect's
fright.
He runs along the meadow paths and tangles up the
grass
In traps to catch the tripping feet of pretty maids
that pass;
He sees an open casement wide, where some fair
dreamer lies,
And boldly enters in to kiss the sleeping beauty's
eyes;
He gently stirs the perfumed hair about the dream-
ing face,
And from the rounded bosom fair he lifts the filmy
lace.
Now in the silver radiance white, within the moon-
light's rim,
He sees where her white hands had placed and
strung a harp for him,
And breathes upon its vibrant strings his softest,
sweetest sighs,
Till at his light caress awakes the soul that in it lies,
And trembling through the mystic spell the moon-
light ever weaves,
In strangely sad sweet undertones the ghost of
music grieves.
Not long can dreaming beauty hold the restless little
sprite;
Away, away, on eager wings, across the southern
night,
He wanders restlessly until he wearies, and in dim
Cool forest aisles he sleeps at last, lulled by his own
sweet hymn.

MORNING AND EVENING.

I SIT by my open window,
And softly the rose-leaves sweet,
Float down in a scented shower,
Drifting about my feet—
My feet that are worn and weary
With the burden and the heat.

Oh! blessed hush of evening
That brings to the weary rest,
The laborer to his cottage,
The bird to its downy nest,
When the sun in a sea of crimson
Is drowned in the shining west.

We think, in the busy morning,
Of a journey just begun;
We think, in the hush of evening,
Of a journey almost done,
And rest in that dim, sweet city,
That needeth no light of sun.

With eyes, in the glow of morning,
Fixed steadily on the crown,
We bend our backs to the burden
With never a sigh or frown;
By evening the cross is heavy,
And we long to lay it down.

And so, in the cooling shadows,
We loosen the galling strings,

If only for one brief moment,
Of the load that clings, and clings,
While over us falls the darkness
Like the shadow of brooding wings.

In the morning our step is lightest,
And our courage is at its best,
And the wounds are not so painful
Where yesterday's burden pressed.
Strength comes to us in the morning,
But the evening brings us rest.

HOMESICK.

THEY bore her from her mountain home a fairer
clime to seek,
To see if milder airs could coax the roses to her
cheek:
For all too thin that cheek had grown, too pale had
grown its rose,
As some frail flower untimely waked and chilled by
mountain snows.
Too still had grown the slender hands, transparent,
through each vein
To finger-tips, the tide of life pulsed with a purple
stain;
The step that once was free and light as thistledown
wind-blown
About the fallow fields at eve, had slow and listless
grown;
The great blue eyes looked far away; and all things
seemed to show,
With paling brow and paling cheek, life's springs
were running low.
And so they bore her tenderly, from mountains she
loved best,
Unto a summer land of bloom, rose-flushed and
sun-caressed;
Warm-breathed it panted in the sun, or cooled be-
neath the shade
Of fragrant, gold-flecked orange groves, where
dusky children played.

A dreamful land of ease; no winds about it roughly
blew,
Where every flower dropped nectared sweets as
drops the honey-dew.
But ever when the evening fell, her sad eyes never
failed
To turn where yet the dying sun his blood-red ban-
ners trailed,
For there, beyond that purple wall, by mountain
breezes fanned,
And bright, but very far away, was her own snow-
wreathed land.

“This land is fairer than my own, though fair my
own has seemed,
But this ” she softly said, “is like the Heaven of
which I’ve dreamed.
And brighter are the flowers, I know, that southern
winds call forth,
But I would give them all for one pale snow-drop
from the north.
The fair magnolia stately stands in robe of rustling
sheen,
O’er all the trees she proudly reigns, their royal,
crownèd queen;
And deep in cool, dark primal woods touched by
no woodman’s hand
The gray, moss-bearded cypress boles like mystic
Druids stand;
But dearer far to me than these on which the south
sun shines,
Are trees where great gray eagles nest, the sougling
mountain pines.

The passionate black eyes I love; but then they're
not so true

As some I left in my own land, although of colder hue:
I dreamed of them last night,—'twas when you left
me all alone—

They came love-lighted as of yore, and looked into
my own

With the old look, but strangely sad, and dim, as if
in pain,

As when, sometimes, blue summer skies are misted
o'er with rain.

Spring airs are warming now the heights at home;
the little rills,

From their long winter bondage slipped, go singing
down the hills;

The violet, warmed by vernal sun, wakes in its
mossy bed

And opes its pretty eyes of blue, and lifts its sleepy
head:

I know each tender flower that blooms, and where
the earliest hide,

I know each fronded fern that decks the mountain's
crannied side.

The catkins on the willows hang; the buds are burst-
ing through

Their downy chrysalis of brown; my wood-doves
softly coo;—

I know them all, the downy things, that moan as if
bereaved,

For every tender little breast against my own has
grieved."

And thus like her own doves she grieved, while
paler grew her cheeks,

And ever turned her great sad eyes toward the
mocking peaks.
The languid daughters of the land, graceful and
dreamy eyed,
With loving hearts and tender hands came in their
stately pride,
Like wind-blown petals of the rose, soft, sweet, they
floated in,
And tried with cooing voice and smile an answering
smile to win.
Sometimes, across the wistful face a fleeting bright-
ness gleamed,
But all her smiles were more like tears, so faint and
sad they beamed.
And so they brought her fruits and flowers, and
softly went their ways,
While more like snow-drops grew her cheeks
through all the long bright days.

And now, the last sad hour was come, at close of
one fair day,
And like a fading flower white upon her bed she lay.
No sun for her would ever rise, no morn would ever
break,
For she must now, and all alone, the last strange
journey make.
The mock-bird in the china-trees had trilled his last
sweet note,
A few low, drowsy twitterings still slipped from his
sleepy throat;
Tired with the concert in the grove, where he all day
had sung,
All quiet now and safe within his leafy hammock
swung.

And all the sweet warm land was still, hushed in
the holy calm
Of eve, ere sleep the tired eyes seals with his pop-
pied balm.

“Now open all the casement wide, once more, that
I may see,
The last, last time, that gray rock wall that bars my
Heaven from me.
The sun goes down where I would go, beyond that
mocking wall,
And when he rises in the morn, on me you need not
call;
I shall not hear your loving voice, nor heed your
gentle tone,
For I shall then be far away in some dim land un-
known.
I longed to see my friends and home and native land
once more,
As weary homesick saints have pined to see the
Heavenly shore;
But now I go a different way; no guide the way to
mark;
I cannot tell if I shall find a pathway through the dark.
Oh, home! No more your mountain streams my
tired feet will lave,
No more your snow-drops bloom for me, except
upon my grave!
Tell him, my blue-eyed friend,”—and here the gen-
tle eyes grew dim—
“That while my failing heart could feel, its last
thought was of him,
And say to him, the kiss he pressed in parting on
my brow

Still lingered, while the world grew dim,—it thrills
me even now.”

She gently sighed and ceased to speak, and on her
quiet breast

The wan hands fluttered softly down, like white
doves to their nest.

Then gently, touched by unseen hands, down
dropped the curtains white

And hid the pretty eyes of blue forevermore from
sight.

Night trailed her robes across the skies, through
sunset's golden bars,

And caught from Day's fast fading fires a brand to
light her stars;

Through all the vaulted dome she sped, swift as an
eagle flies,

And kindled all her stars to light that journey to the
skies.

Along her border-land they burned down to the
mountain crest,

Like battle-fires along a field where sleeping armies
rest.

She slept: the moonlight drifted in; like some fair
saint of old,

She lay, her hair about her face, an aureole of
gold.

The south-wind wooed her as he passed, in soft
ecstatic bliss,

And sighed to find so fair a cheek blushed not
beneath his kiss;

A restless white rose gently stirred and tapped upon
the pane;

The holly-berries from the trees dripped like a crimson rain:

Then through that still, moon-flooded room the great
White Mystery passed,

The pale hands fluttered once again and—she was
home at last.

RESTITUTION.

SOMETIME, some great white day of days, we
think

All things that puzzle us will be made plain,
And we shall find again each broken link
That, somehow, we have lost from our life chain.

Buried in dust along the great highway
Somewhere they lie, waiting the finder's hand,
And they will all be gathered up some day,
And we shall have again the perfect band.

By and by, somewhere, the good seed that we sow,
Though long within the ground it may have lain,
Will wake to life from its long sleep and grow,
And ripen for us into golden grain.

The good we do, the kindly word we've said
To those who heard and calmly went their ways
Unheeding, will return to us, "like bread
Cast on the waters, after many days."

THE OLD STORY.

ALL day in the apple orchard
Has the robin's note been heard,
As he warbled a little love-song
To Jenny, his darling bird.

But now in the gathering shadows,
Brown robin has ceased to sing,
And is fast asleep by Jenny,
With his head beneath his wing.

Only the river's murmur
Is heard in the peaceful vale,
As it breaks in shining ripples
That flash in the moonbeams pale;

And the chirp of a restless cricket
Somewhere in the grasses hid;
And someone telling a story
Of something that Katy did.

And yonder is *our* Katy
With Tom, by the orchard bars;
And two heads are close together
In sight of the blinking stars.

"Katy-did!" chirps the little gossip
Out there in the shining dew;
And now I can well believe him,
Katy-*did*, I saw her, too.

'Tis only the same old story,
But the sweetest of all we know,
First told in the apple-orchard
Of Eden, so long ago.

THE EMPTY NICHE.

BE still my heart, be still, and do not fret
About that empty niche. Tears of regret
Will never make our new, strange idol fit
Within the niche that we have made for it.
But there; I'll chide no more, turn not away
So sadly grieved. What is it that you say?
You had prepared the incense for the shrine,
And in libation poured the sacred wine,
And culled your fairest flowers to wreath his brow?
The wine is stale, the flowers are withered now.
Somehow I can not reason as I ought,
I, too, am sad, I know we fondly thought,
Among our household deities, to place
A stranger idol in that empty space—
That niche we carved up there among them all
With our own hands upon the temple wall.
But then for labor vain and fading flowers
And wasted wine, my heart, the fault is ours,
In that we did a foolish thing and odd,
We made the niche before we saw the god.

JONATHAN W. GORDON.

WE come about his quiet bed —
How grand he looks — and softly tread;
With loving eyes that do not weep,
We watch him as he lies asleep.

Awhile, about him, thus we stand:
Then take in ours his kindly hand;
Alas! it does not now respond
To touch or clasp, however fond.

We call him, and he does not heed:
At last we realize indeed,
That he has passed beyond recall,—
And *now* the drops of sorrow fall.

The ringing voice that once could fill
A room with eloquence, is still.
Dead! dead! dirge-like the sad refrain
Beats in the heart, burns in the brain.

Oh, reaper! reaping through the world,
Why must thy gleaning-hook be curled
About our best, the golden wheat,
When fields are full of tares and cheat?

“THE LAND OF FLOWERS.”

A SUMMER land of afternoon!
A land of drowse and drone
Where languid eyelids droop and swoon,
Drugged by the perfume blown
In drifting fragrance, heavy, sweet,
Stirred from each petal's fold
By little airs that beat, and beat,
The jasmine's scented gold.

The breeze scarce stirs the china-trees
So languidly it goes,
While lazy butterflies and bees
Drone round the heavy rose;
And restless birds with lambent wings
Flit 'mid the whispering leaves,
Where grieving Philomela sings
Through dewy, star-lit eves.

The dome, where shadowy cloudlets pass,
Is blue as Latin skies;
The yellow sunshine on the grass,
A golden fret-work lies
Beneath the overhanging vines,
The haunt of bird and bee,
Where snake-like bamboo intertwines
With Rose of Cherokee.

Here every air distills perfume,
And fancy wanders free,

While every flower is Lotus bloom,
Each shrub a Dreamland tree.
Oh, soft, alluring land, how fair
And bright thy beauty beams!
Thy drowsy, jasmine-scented air
Wooes all my soul to dreams.

THE MARCH OF THE YEARS.

WHEN chill December's wintry wind is blowing
 Its drifting snow,
We tell each other that the year is going;—
 Where does it go?
The years go by in serried, swift progression,
 When one is gone
Another takes its place in quick succession
 And follows on.

Soundless they go, as some strong eagle flying
 In dim mid air,
To a mysterious twilight country lying
 Somewhere, somewhere—
An unknown awesome land, the still Forever,
 Where shadows meet
With shadows, phantom years that never
 Each other greet.

A wreck-strewn land of captives, ever noiseless,
 What hopes and fears
Are lying in its shadows cold and voiceless;
 What seas of tears—
Tears, bitter tears, dumb sorrow's words unspoken,
 Wept by dim eyes
In every clime since Eve's sad heart was broken
 In Paradise.

There's naught can stay the greedy years from pil-
 lage—
 Marauding band,

They sack a city and destroy a village
 With ruthless hand,
And fasten on the glowing form of beauty
 Their rapine hold;
But all are captives, all are lawful booty—
 The young, the old.

Insatiate Time! he bears away our pleasures,
 Nor heeds our call;
Youth, beauty, strength, our heart's most cherished
 treasures,
 He takes them all;
Or if from his strong hand awhile we've won them,
 The years in line
Will mark them his, and boldly fix upon them
 His signet sign.

'Tis strange to us as 'twas to hoary sages,
 This ceaseless round,
This march of time, this tramp of viewless ages
 That makes no sound,
But with light, muffled feet that never weary,
 Forevermore
Goes marching on to that strange land and dreary,
 The Unknown Shore.

HELIOTROPE.

ONLY a little spray of Heliotrope!
Sweetest of all sweet flowers that ope
To greet the morn, waked by the day-god's beam
And south-wind's kiss from some sweet, gliding
dream,
Within its tiny heart and purple bells —
So ancients said — a pretty legend dwells,
And every scented breath it did exhale
In olden time breathed forth the amorous tale.
Sweet flower! I love to think its beauty wooed
His thoughts to me, when in a dreaming mood
He passed it by, and in an idle hour
Plucked it and sent to me the little flower.
Full well I know the tender thoughts I weave
Are only dreams, and come but to deceive.
The flower was never meant for me, its petals hold
Their secret still within each spicy fold,
And I am only mocked by fond conceit
Born of my heart and of the perfume sweet.
"False, false as fair, your dreams," stern Reason cries;
"But sweet, so very sweet," my heart replies.
And, ah! we cannot still the restless soul
E'en if we would; nor check the waves that roll
From memory's sea, whose tide-waves ever flow
To lap the golden shore of long ago.
Like a lone bird that seeks some fairer clime,
My thoughts still fly to that fond, foolish time
When life was full of tender, budding hope,
And all the world was filled with Heliotrope.

BOOKS.

BOOKS are wells from which we draw and quaff
Rich draughts of knowledge and of pure delight;
Castalian fountains bubbling to the brim,
Like that of old upon Parnassus' height.

Books are good company, in them we hold
Communion with the minds of greatest worth,
The poet, saint, philosopher and sage,
And all like kindred spirits of the earth.

Books are our truest friends, in them we find
Good comrades, loyally to us allied,
When all the world gives but a wondering look,
And passes by upon the other side.

MORNING.

L O! from out the orient splendor
Comes the Day,
While about his chariot, golden
Sunbeams play;
Dew-drops on the meadow grasses,
All alight,
Glinting in the yellow sunshine,
Diamonds bright.

From around the homely cottage,
Where they creep,
Wake the purple morning-glories
From their sleep;
Wake the roses, fresh and dewy —
Red and white —
Blushing from the wind's caresses
Through the night.

List to Nature's matin music
'Mong the trees;
Singing bird and rustling leaflet;
Humming bees
'Mong the scarlet honeysuckles,
Robbers bold
Are they, with their loads of treasure,
Yellow gold.

And the fragrance of the meadows,
Perfume rare,

Rose and violet and jasmine,
 Fills the air.
Life again has slowly wakened,
 Newly born,
And with every bud and blossom
 Greets the morn.

D

JUDAH'S LAMENT.

AT THE "WAILING PLACE."

'TIS the solemn hour of sunset
In David's city; the crests
Of the Moabite hills are glowing
Where the sacred fire still rests.
The white doves are homeward flying,
And softly Shiloah flows;
While sweet with the breath of Sharon
The cool wind wandering goes.

'Tis the hour of hours to the Moslem;
From every minaret high
Floats out, on the evening breezes,
The Muezzin's plaintive cry;
Re-echoed o'er hill and valley
To the "faithful" everywhere
In lands of the Arab's Allah;
It is Islam's call to prayer.

To the south the dark-browed Arab
Turns quickly his dusky face,
For yonder in holy Mecca
Is the Prophet's resting place.
"Allah il Allah!" he murmurs,
"In him I put my trust,
And Mahomet is his Prophet;"
Then he bows him to the dust.

The city is wrapped in silence;
Only the wandering breeze

Is sighing among the olives
And stirring the cypress trees;
In sad Gethsemane's garden
The shadow lies dark and wet,—
Shadow that never is lifted
From sorrowful Olivet.

The Judean moon is rising,
And gilding with palest gold
Each crest and pinnacled tower
Of the Jebusite city old:
The southern cross is flashing
Its glittering points of light,
Like a beautiful gem-set jewel,
Afar on the breast of Night.

From blossoming oleander
And shimmering almond pale,
Comes ever the sweet, sad fluting
Of Syria's Nightingale;
And the eastern night is languid
With the odorous breath of balms;
And the great fan leaves hang heavy
And motionless on the palms.

But hark! there's a sound of sorrow
Out there by the rocky steep;
It comes from the "Place of Wailing,"
Where Judea goes to weep
And mourn over vanished glory
And beautiful Zion's fall,
Till wet with their bitter weeping
Are the rocks in the rugged wall.

'Gainst the cold gray stones their foreheads
The sorrowing people lay,
And ever with lamentation
To Abraham's God they pray:
"Almighty God of our fathers!
Pity our fallen state!
How long, how long, Oh, Jehovah!
Must thy chosen people wait

"For the scepter and regal kingdom
By the prophets oft foretold,
And Prince of the House of David
In the royal line enrolled !
Oh, God of Isaac and Jacob!
Thou infinite God who reigns:
Restore unto us our Temple,
And sever these Moslem chains!

"And then from the bending willows
Our harps we will take again,
And the hills to the farthest oceans
Shall echo the joyous strain;
And the beautiful songs of Zion
By the rivers will again be sung,
Though so long in its rusting silence,
Fair Judea's harp has hung! "

High on the Mosque of Omar,
Flashing o'er Kedron's vale,
Glitters the golden crescent,
Mocking that mournful wail.

THE MESSAGE.

S OFTLY now the daylight closes,
While the perfume of the roses
Through the drowsy air distilling,
All the sweet June eve is filling,
And the bee is folded up
Safe within the lily's cup.

Far beyond the darkling valleys,
Where he lingers, where he dallies
In a rosy light so tender,
Sets the red sun in his splendor;
Soon the stars will glint and gleam,
Mirrored in the placid stream.

Light as lover's stolen blisses,
Now the wan moon's loving kisses
Rest on every bud and blossom
Night is wearing on her bosom,
Pale moon, while you are so free,
Kiss somebody once for me.

On his eyelids light caresses
Gently now the night-wind presses,
And like soft magnetic fingers
Soothingly the light touch lingers;—
Night-wind, let that touch of thine,
Sometimes, in his dreams, seem mine.

HIDE THE SCARS.

O H shadowed lives! where e'er you be,
With mournful eyes that only see
Your garden of Gethsemane,

No longer sit from dusk till dawn,
With trembling lip and cheek of wan,
By sorrow's stream—your Babylon.

Though grief may gnaw your heart in twain,
Hide, hide the scars, the tears restrain,
Take down your harps and play again.

Sing, though the hours be sad and long,
For always 'mid the passing throng,
There's someone waiting for your song.

And lips compelled to drink the rue,
The bitterest that ever grew,
Still make no sign whate'er you do:

Smile, though your hearts be full of dole,
Though every smile your lips control
Is o'er a death-bed in your soul.

Laugh and be gay, for this I know:
The world loves not the face of woe,
Loves not to see the tear-drops flow.

And you who bear the sword and shield,
Whose hearts are but a battle-field,
With neither side disposed to yield,

Call you no roll when battle's done,
Make no report at set of sun,
The world cares not which side has won.

But, though your wounds be running red,
Be sure, ere yet the day is fled,
To shroud the faces of your dead.

TO THE MEMORY OF
PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE.

O H, fair South-land! our memory clings
To him who woke the sweetest strain
From Southern Harp, the singer Hayne,
Whose dead hand swept its trembling strings

With master-touch and gentle hand,
Till clear as song of mocking-bird
Its vibrant chords to music stirred,
And thrilled through all a listening land.

With loving hands a wreath we twine
For him; alas! no laurel crown—
Too weak our hands to pluck it down—
But twine it of the Southern pine.

We weave it of the restless trees,
The Southern pine he loved so well,
The pine that has a tale to tell,
Forever whispering in the breeze.

But, lapped in peace in his own place,
What boots it, in that city dim,
And what are bays and crowns to him
Who with his God is "face to face"?

VIOLETS.

SWEET violets, starred with the dew.
What eager pains I took
To hunt their pretty eyes of blue,
Along the chattering brook;
Sweet violets, that bloomed for you
Within that sunny nook.

The loving warmth of sunny skies
Shone on their mossy bed,
And opened all the dewy eyes,
And raised each drooping head;
Then up they got in mild surprise
To find the snow had fled.

Blue as the waters of the bay,
Sweet harbingers of spring,
To him whose skies are cold and gray,
I said, they'll surely bring
A dream of bursting buds to-day,
And whirl of robin's wing.

“AFTER THE STORM.”

AFTER the storm, see the good ship ride,
With canvas set to the favoring breeze,
Over the waves in her gallant pride;
She is making port from threatening seas.

And thus will life's voyage ever be
When the sea is rough and the night is dark,
And never a beacon light you see,
Or welcoming port for your storm-tossed barque.

In the darkest cloud there will come a rift,
And you'll see again your pilot star;
While the blinding mists will surely lift
In time to avoid the wrecking bar.

Though storm-fiends howl till the stout heart quails
When winds are warring, do not despond;
Steer steadily on under close-reefed sails,
The lights of the harbor are just beyond.

The storm will cease o'er the waters wide,
And again you will see the sun-rays warm,
And the sea grow calm, while you safely glide
Into the harbor, “After the Storm.”

INDIAN SUMMER.

ÆOLUS whistles and swirls through the trees,
And brings down in showers the flame-
colored leaves,

Leaving skeleton branches mournfully bare
Of aught, save the web that the wood-spider
weaves.

What a languor there hangs o'er the dear teeming
earth,

As wearied with labor she rests from her toil;
She hath yielded a bountiful harvest to those
Of her sons who had thrift to gather the spoil.
The blue of the heavens seems misty and far,
And the sun looks down through a soft, dreamy
haze,

That hangs like a veil over valley and hill,
And lends a new charm to these Indian days,
When the red man left our green wooded hills,
For the land of the sunset and forests unknown,
Taking wigwam and wampum, how thankful are we
That his beautiful summer he left for our own.

UNDER THE CLOVER.

DOWN in a valley, where blossoming clover
Fills the air with perfume, and the rose bending
over

The stream to gaze at itself through the rushes,
Is kissed by the sun and the wind till it blushes,
We laid her to rest,
In that vale in the west.

There the bright gold of the buttercup's blossom
Burns at her feet and shines on her bosom,
And the Summer-wind sings her a song as he
passes—

A lullaby low 'mong the flowers and the grasses
That grow round her bed,
At her feet and her head.

She hears not the sound of our bitterest crying,
So low 'neath the clover her bright head is lying,
And never again will the life-passions riot
In the heart that has grown so chillingly quiet,
To throb ne'er again
With passionate pain.

Forever at rest, secure from all sorrow,
With never a care or a thought for the morrow,
The head that ever was tossing and turning
With the fever of life that was scorching and burning
In the sorrowful past,
Is quiet at last.

Ah! like a bell that is solemnly tolling,
Time's ponderous wheels are endlessly rolling,
And the flowers of life, all withered and dying,
In heaps in his merciless pathway are lying;
 But the dead do not feel
 His chariot-wheel.

Under a coverlet 'broidered and braided
With blossoms and vines, by tulip-trees shaded,
Where meadow-larks sing and the sun loves to dally,
Deep in the heart of the blossoming valley,
 Let her dreamlessly sleep,
 Forgetting to weep.

MOONLIGHT ON THE ST. LAW-
RENCE.

SOFTLY the evening shadows fall,
As the daylight dies in a golden flame,
And we hear the voice of our boatman call,
As the bells ring out from Notre Dame.

The moonlight shimmers upon the waves,
Stretching away in lance-like bars,
Where the silent night-bird comes and laves,
And the river is sown with myriad stars.

Like globes of fire, one by one,
When the city's lights are seen no more,
Lighthouses flash in the shadows dun,
And fitfully burn along the shore.

The boatman sings in his rocking boat,
And sweeter than song e'er seemed before,
The music that comes from his tawny throat
To the rhythmic dip of the slender oar.

Out from the bayou cool and green,
Cutting the berylline water through,
And leaving a trail of rippling sheen,
Silently glides the slim canoe.

About o'er the water's shining brim,
The graceful sail-boats dip and toss,
With sails outspread in the moonlight dim,
Like the great white wings of an albatross.

Onward the burnished river goes,
Hiding itself in a darkling maze;
And sweet as the breath of the summer rose
The night-winds come, while we lie and gaze

At the shimmering path the stars impave,
Till our restless soul is steeped in bliss.
Oh, river! Oh, moonlight on the wave!
Was ever a scene so fair as this?

THE GHOST OF THE CASTLE.

'TIS the hour of midnight. The old year is dying,
And a mist from the mere comes up like a rain;
The night-wind is eerily sobbing and sighing,
And a ghostly knocking is heard on the pane:
'Tis the old yew-tree by the window that's tapping,
And weirdly it sounds through the dim lighted
halls,
Like the ghost of a sound, or spirit hands rapping,
And a "death-watch" is heard on the tapestried
walls.

Down in his kennel the watch-dog is howling,
A piteous sound that runs through the night;
There is something abroad the sweet night befouling,
Some crime, and the moon hides her face from the
sight.
And now is ringing through chamber and turret
A cry that reaches the shivering stars—
A cry that curdles the blood but to hear it—
And quickly fly open the bolts and the bars.

And a wind like that from Avernian River,
Charnal and damp sweeps down through the
gloom;
The lamps burn dim, and a horrible shiver
Runs through the tapestry over the room.
Every cheek in the great old castle is paling,
As with blood-stained bosom, Oh! piteous plight,
Rushes a form with white garments trailing,—
The Ghost of the Castle is walking to-night.

DREAM-LAND.

THROUGH beautiful gates we enter,
Shut never by night or by day,
And nimble fancies are waiting
To lead us the flower-decked way,
And bring us our heart's desire.
Whatever we wish for is ours,
When once we have crossed o'er the border
And entered the magic bowers.

A vast and measureless region,
Far reaching from zone to zone,
And beyond the alluring gateway
There never is boundary stone;
'Tis free to all, to the peasant
As well as the king on his throne;
The poor man can fearlessly enter
And pre-empt a claim for his own.

It is here that our best and dearest
Come always with airy tread,
And lovingly walk beside us—
The living we love and the dead;
They come at our slightest beckon,
With the speed of the swiftest thought,
Death has no power to hold them,
And distance to them is naught.

Here dwelleth the waiting fancies,
Our own, a wonderful band,

Fleet-footed and never weary,
In a beautiful palace grand,
With pinnacles reaching to Heaven
And pillars and portals wide,
Its great halls misted and silent,
With the color of sunset dyed.

Close by is another palace,
So like a cathedral dim,
We list for the bells slow tolling
And the chanting of priestly hymn;
Here all our treasures are gathered
Inside of the sacred wall,
We call it our "House of Treasure"
And sometimes "Memory's Hall."

Each song that has ever thrilled us,
Is here in this wondrous shrine
And sighs through memory's arches
With melody half divine.
Each frail, fair bud we have cherished
And tended with loving care,
We find it a perfect blossom
In loveliest Dream-land fair.

The gates to this land of magic
Forever wide-open stand;
Hope's iris-hued bow of promise
Over all, like an arch, is spanned.
A land with never a shadow
To darken its roseate beams,
Region of dear enchantment,
Beautiful land of dreams.

TO ———

'TIS sweet to think, when I am dead,
That you will come and softly tread
About my still and lonesome bed.

How strange to think I shall not feel
Your presence, when you softly kneel,
Your gentle touch naught will reveal.

Your touch that warmed my blood like wine,
That never yet came near to mine
Without my heart gave some mute sign.

Maybe you'll bring me flowers to shed
Their fragrance, roses white and red,
About me, at my feet and head.

Not that you think I feel or know
Down in my narrow bed below,
But just because I love them so.

I would not have you weep for me;
When my last resting place you see,
Be glad to know that I am free.

Glad that life's march, at God's behest—
To me a weary march at best—
At last has rounded into rest.

IN THE LIFE PRISON.

WE pass within the prison
Where death-like shadow falls,
They tell a mournful story,
Each stone of these gray walls;
We feel a creeping shudder
Come o'er us as we tread,
Like that when all unknowing
One walks above the dead.

Behind those grated windows,
Close to the iron bars,
Where sunlight never enters,
Nor light of holy stars,
Press now the haggard faces
All dark and passion-scarred,
Made in His perfect image,
But now, alas! how marred.

He said, as once He blessed them,
The children, long ago,
"Of such is Heaven's Kingdom,"
The Christ that loved them so;
And *these* were little children,
And some fond mother's care,
And played about some cottage
All innocent and fair.

Maybe they said "Our Father!"
These crime-stained hands you see

Perchance were meekly folded
Once at a mother's knee.
How far their feet have wandered
In folly, sin and crime;
Ah, me! how dark the record
Since childhood's happy time.

We pass without the portal
And leave the unhallowed ground,
And close the massive gateway
Shuts with a doleful sound.
Oh! death in life how dreary!
Behind those clanging gates,
Within those gloomy arches,
Nor hope nor mercy waits.

BRYANT.

FULL long beside the "Massive Gate"
He calmly waited; well he knew
The warder in his own good time
Would turn the key and let him through.

And now the evening shadows fall,
The night of death approaches; see!
The silent watchman, pale and cold,
Takes from his breast the well-worn key;

But moves not, while the sorrowing nine,
With faces sad and footsteps slow,
Take from the failing hands the harp
Whose strings still vibrate sweet and low.

They lay the olive crown of peace
Upon the great breast, now so calm;
Place on his brow fresh laurel leaves,
And in his hands the victor's palm.

At last the noiseless hinges turn,
And looking on with steadfast gaze,
We see him pass within the gate,
Crowned with the never-fading bays.

EVENING ON MONTE SANO.

WEATHED clouds like shining serpents in-
tertwined,

Sinuous, coiling ever fold on fold,
Upclimb the blue-hung arching skies that bind
The world, from that strange sea of molten gold—
The great red sea—whose waves at eve arise,
Splashed by the chariot wheels of conquered Day,
Until against the walls of Paradise

Almost, is thrown the mist of red-gold spray.
The valley lies in softest shadow, still

Tinged with a roseate light, where yet the sun—
Long since slipped down from mountain height and
hill—

Dallies, ere leaving it to evening dun.
Drifting about the somber, wooded heights,
An aromatic odor fills the breeze,
Distilled at eve and through the dim cool nights,
From purple-berried, pungent cedar trees.—

Hist! did you see it? what was that that ran?

Ah! yonder comes the tawny hunting hound;
And sweet as music from the reeds of Pan,
From mountain side a mellow horn is wound.

Upon the "Sleeping King" the night-dews fall,

About his giant form the shadows lie,
Shrouding his stony sleep in purple pall;

Around his bier strange ghostly forms flit by.

The twilight darkens: in the deep defiles,

Her light from lantern dark the glow-worm flings,

While phosphorescent grow the darkling aisles
 With myriad shining little restless things.
Winding through cedars dark the roadway gleams
 White, with its pave of smooth, hoof-polished
 stone,
And liquid silver run the little streams;
 Across the night the dragon-bats are blown.
Like burnished shield by giant arm raised high,
 The great gold moon hangs o'er the mountain
 crest;
And yonder, glinting through the turquoise sky—
 Star of the eve — is Hesper in the west.

UNSATISFIED.

WHY is it we never are satisfied
With our own, the good that we have gained,
But always throughout the whole world wide
We longing go for the unattained?

The valley is bright with blooming flowers
And sweet with wild-wood scents, but fain
Would we climb the mountain that grandly towers;
And yearn for heights that we cannot gain.

Ah! how we long for the towering peak
Whose top is lost in a mocking haze,
And ever a path to climb we seek
Till our eyes grow dim in steadfast gaze.

The love that our restless arms enfold,
Stirs in our clasp with sad unrest;
And the precious things that are ours to hold
Are never the things we think are best.

Forever we strain our eager sight
Away to the coming time that smiles;
Forgetting the shores of Time are white
With the bleaching wrecks of the after-whiles.

And never is bliss for us complete,
Anywhere underneath the shining stars;
And forever our soul's wild wings we beat,
Like a captive bird against prison bars.

Waiting, waiting, we know not why,
For something. Alas! it is ever thus,—
And never beneath the wind-swept sky,
Do the things we wait for come to us.

THE OLD MAN'S SOLILOQUY.

A DOWN life's stream I've wandered,
Its devious ways have sought,
On many schemes have pondered,
And most have come to naught.
My way has been attended
With some small share of joy;
And good and ill have blended
To form a strange alloy.

But now the lengthening shadows,
That come with setting sun,
Are stealing o'er life's meadows,
My day is almost done.
My eyes have grown quite misty,
I scarce can see to grope
Adown the unknown vista
Of life's last sunset slope.

Youth's hope and its ambition
Are in the afterglow—
Belief in their fruition
Was last of all to go—
But now hope's star forever
Behind the vanished years
Has set, the solemn "never"
Is ringing in my ears.

I longed to climb the highlands,—
The road to Fame was free—

I cared not for the by-lands,
They had no charm for me;
So, up the heights unheeding
The wayside flowers, I passed
To find Fame's highway leading
Up to a grave at last.

The friends I loved have perished,
And I'm alone to-day;
And many an idol cherished
Has proved to be but clay;
On friendship's altar broken,
A heap of ashes cold
Is now the only token
That I worshiped there of old.

The old familiar land-marks
Are passing fast away,
And Time's defacing hand-marks
Are over those that stay:
Gone are the well-known faces,
Each kindly voice I heard,
And strangers in their places
Pass by without a word.

And oft I find me sighing
To be again with those
For many a winter lying
Beneath the drifting snows.
Aye, the old man's growing lonely,
The Age has passed him by,
And naught is left him only
To lay him down and die.

TO MY FRIEND.

O MY friend, where e'er you wander,
With your feet upon the Rhine-land,
Or upon the dreamy Mosel
Floating through the mists of Vine-land;
When to quaint old songs you listen,
Is there never one among them
Brings to you the faintest whisper
Of home songs and those who sung them?

When the evening draws her curtains,
Curtains crimson, purple, golden,
And the Angelus is ringing
From some tower gray and olden;
Does not memory sometimes lead you
To a walk within the gloaming,
In a land toward the sunset,
Ere your truant feet went roaming?

There our last farewells were spoken,
While the bells rang out at even;
And you said you'd not forget me
While the stars remained in heaven.
Still the faithful stars are burning,
As of old, when daylight closes.
But, alas! I am forgotten,
Like last summer's faded roses.

Drowned in moon-mist of the Drachfels
Are the last few fading embers

Of a friendship burned to ashes,
And your heart no more remembers.
Other friends you've made, my pilgrim,
And their newer friendships bind you;
But you'll find them not so faithful
As some friends you've left behind you.

THE NEW YEAR.

AGAIN the bells ring out a chime,
The joyous New Year bringing,
But through it all there runs a strain
Of sadness in their ringing.

Another year with all its joys,
And all its cares and sorrows,
With all its dim and sad to-days,
And all its bright to-morrows:

With all its freight of sin and crime,
And all its good endeavor,
Has sunk into the Sea of Time,
And lost to us forever.

The time we might have given a friend
The help he so much needed;
The orphan's cry we would not hear,
Or if 'twas heard not heeded.

The lowly poor, we've passed them by,
Perhaps, in bitter scorning,
Forgetting life is but a span—
A breath of summer morning.

Forgetting Fortune's wheel may turn,
And *they* may be the winners;
Forgetting One who loved the poor,
And did not scorn the sinners.

Vain now regret, in vain our sighs
As memory rushes o'er us;
Our hope is in the coming time—
The glad New Year before us.

THE SIREN OF THE WINE.

“I’M at home on the banks of the blue Guadal-
quivir,
In the land that you sometimes Hispania call,
Where the pomegranate blooms, and the fig and the
olive
Ripen their fruit on the sunny old wall.

“You will find me wherever the wine-cup is sparkling
With amber or rose,—the vintage is mine,—
On the vine-covered hills so dreamily misted
With purple, that drowse by the flow of the Rhine.

“What though they tell you I sting like an adder,
When once my victim is close in my clasp,
And my kisses are noxious as poison of upas,
And deadly as bite of the Libyan asp.

“Why I’ll drown every care, every burden and
sorrow
Of yours, in my cup, all the canker and fret,
Drink it, ’tis better than Lethean waters
To deaden memory and make you forget.

“Let them say that its color is blood of my victims
Lured to their death, put away silly fears,
And do not believe them, although they may tell you
The shining drops on my beaker are tears.

“False, false, there never is blood in the chalice
I hold to your lips, it is innocent stain,—

The blush of the grape distilled in the sunshine—
Drink it; 'tis sweetest nepenthe for pain."

How sweetly she sings you to death and to ruin,
As round you she seeks her arms to entwine;
But stay not to listen, for many have perished,
Lured by the siren that dwells in the wine.

THE WIFE'S LAST WORDS.

TOGETHER we've climbed the highlands,
But my feet have so weary grown,
I fain would rest in the shadows cool,
And you must go on alone.

I have tried to keep beside you,
And climb to the very crest;
But I'm tired ere the half-way mark is gained,
And long for a little rest.

It has been so sweet to linger
And gather the wayside flowers;
But my stay with you, on the hills of life,
Is narrowing down to hours.

I know you will often listen
For the old, familiar tone,
And long for the sound of feet that once
Kept step beside your own.

But you will not grieve forever
For a face you can not see;
Sometime, I will be in your loving heart,
But a sad, sweet memory.

And then your heart that is lonely
Will turn to a living face,
And feet that are strange to me may walk
In my old accustomed place.

But you never will quite forget me;
I know there will always be
For me, in your heart a little room,
Of which you will keep the key.

And, sometimes when you are weary,
And your heart, maybe, is sore,
To that half-forgotten room you will turn
And enter the secret door.

And up from the cob-webbed arches,
Where your soul's best wine is kept,
I will come, as noiseless as shadows fall,
From the place where I have slept.

Then, gently, by some sweet magic,
And light as the subtile air,
You will feel invisible fingers drop
Caressingly on your hair.

And awhile you will drop the burden
Of life, and quietly lie
With half-closed eyes on my shadowy breast,
As you've lain in the days gone by.

This other may love you fondly,
Tender and true, and yet
The new love will never be like the old,—
And I know you will not forget.

A WOODLAND PICTURE.

DOWN where a purling streamlet pranks
Through woodland and through meadow,
With water willows on its banks,
That cast a cooling shadow

O'er clear, deep wells as pure and cool
As that of old that bubbled
Within Bethesda's healing pool,
By holy angels troubled.

Here Nature paints a charming scene,
Enwreathed with flags and lilies,
And spreads a carpet dainty green
Spotted with daffodillies.

With knotted fringe of adder-grass,
And tufted o'er with mosses,
Worn gray in spots where footsteps pass,
And winding sheep-path crosses.

O'erhead the snowy wild plum-trees
Inlace to make an arbor,
Where drowsy, drunken bumble-bees,
And yellow-jackets harbor.

Beneath the feet, in tangled maze,
Is sweet arbutus trailing;
Adown the winding water-ways
Go water-spiders sailing.

A vagrant lot, away they rove,
With neither head nor ruler,
To foreign lands—up in the cove—
With climate somewhat cooler.

And where the lithe, green willows sweep
Across the shallow landing,
In cool pellucid pools, knee-deep
The lazy cows are standing.

A “master-piece,” but simple, true,
With lights and shadows mellow;
A woodland picture framed in blue,
And gilt with sunshine yellow.

THE NORSE KING.

COMRADE, bring once more our shield,
We will seek the battlefield
Where the war-spears gleam the thickest,
Where we'll meet pale Hela quickest;
For last night we heard them call
For our soul, in far Valhal.

Shield and helm and corselet bring;
We would arm us like a king
For the last great day before us,
That e'en now is dawning o'er us;
All in glittering harness dight,
We would reach Valhal to-night.

Yonder, in that castle old,
We were born a sea-king bold;
All our life have mocked at danger,
And to pale fear been a stranger;
Never has this swart cheek paled,
Never has this strong arm failed.

But the Nornas sit and wait
By our finished web of fate;
Warp and woof it has been blended,
But the strong weft now is ended;
Now they cut it from the loom,
And we go to meet our doom.

Seek our black-hulled galleys; call
All our brave men,—Vikings all,—

Tell them, on the billows rocking,
At the nether demons mocking,
As we sailed the North Seas o'er,
We shall sail with them no more.

Battle-comrade, nevermore
Will you need to go before,
When the war-like host advances
With a gleaming wall of lances,
And a living shield to place,
Thus, before your master's face.

Soon to Odin on his throne,
Looking o'er the world alone,
With his great shield, rune-engraven,
By his side, will come the raven,
With its mystic whisperings
Of a story of dead kings.

Then the wild boar will be killed,
While the drinking cups are filled
Till the mead in beaded chalice
Floods each cup within the palace,
And an amber stain appears
In the golden Hall of Spears.

Soft white hands—a loving task—
Then will loose the battered casque,
And will come a fair Valmaiden
With the cup all honey-laden,
For the warriors battle-slain;
While the gold shields ring again.

Then we'll lay our warrior's pride,
Shield and shattered helm, aside,

And we'll tell in song and story
Of this bloody field of glory;
How the swords and helmets clashed,
And the murderous lances flashed.

Soon we'll see fair Idavold,
Vingolf, Gladsheim's walls of gold;
Soon we'll reach the holy mountain,
And shall drink from Miner's fountain,
Quaff from that immortal spring
Cooling drafts the Valmaids bring.

Bring the drink-horns, fill them up!
'Tis the last time we shall sup
Till we reach the happy valley,
And with gods in bright Valhalla
We shall drink the golden mead,
When our spirit has been freed.

Ah! e'en now we feel the dart
Of the Valkyr, touch our heart;
She has marked us for dread Odin!
Great Valfather, mighty Wodan!
And we go in regal state,
Like a king, to meet our fate.

SOUVENIR.

'TIS only a withered blossom,
That once was red;
Only a little rosebud,
Faded and dead.

But a musky scent still lingers,
A faint perfume;
A ghost of its olden sweetness
And summer bloom.

"Not much," you will say, "to cherish."
But memory goes
Back to one radiant summer.—
Poor faded rose!

Only a little token
Of love and trust,
And, like the hand that culled it,
Crumbling to dust.

THE OLD WIFE.

YES, the roses they are pretty that you've kindly
thought to bring,
But then, not like the roses, dear, when you and
I were young,
That grew about our cabin door and blossomed in
the spring
And in pink tasseled fragrance o'er our lowly lintel
hung.

And well do I remember, in the days of which I
speak,
The far-off happy Junes of life that now behind
us lie,
How you said those damask roses matched the
roses in my cheek;—
Ah! the world was fairer, don't you think, in those
old days gone by?

The roses they were sweeter, in the blooming Junes
of old,
Than those crimson-petaled blossoms that are
blowing down the wind,
And the sunshine it was brighter than the fairies'
fabled gold
That in childhood's happy innocence we seek, but
never find.

And the bending skies were bluer, though they
seemed so far away

In their amethystine splendor — they are nearer
now I think—
And the hours were surely longer of the golden
summer day,
And brighter burned the far-off fires of stars that
softly blink.

Yes, that bird is singing sweetly, but there's some-
thing that I miss,—

Do you remember, dear, the bird that used to sing
at dawn?

Ah! that mocking-bird, I know it, sang a sweeter
song than this,

In the old, bee-haunted locust, by my window,
years ago.

“But still the world is fair,” you say, well, yes, I
know it, dear,

But grown a little dim to us, I know you will allow;
And it grows a little darker now with each succeeding
year,

And 'twas fairer in the olden time, I know, than it
is now.

THE FIRST KISS.

THEY watched the daylight slowly wane,
Till evening came with purple shadows;
They loitered in the dewy lane
And daisied meadows.

The moon looked through her white cymar,
A changeful goddess, fair but fickle,
And hung close by the evening star
Her silver sickle.

She looked up to the azure skies,
Where stars were shining in their splendor;
He looked into her azure eyes
So true and tender,

And longed to kiss her cheek the while,
Where little loves had softly nested,
And tempting lips where now a smile
Of mischief rested.

Like startled bird upon its nest,
His captive heart it sadly fluttered;
He stood a coward thus confessed—
No word he uttered.

Her hand upon his restless arm,
Soft as a curling rose-leaf nestled;
“To kiss it could it be much harm?”
And thus he wrestled.

At last a little ruse he planned:
He softly touched it, still it lingered;
And then the rings upon her hand
He gently fingered.

He ventured then a gentle squeeze—
Her pretty head just reached his shoulder—
The moon was hid behind the trees,
Which made him bolder;—

He stole an arm about her waist—
His heart was beating like a hammer—
His lips on hers he softly placed;
And then grew calmer.

I think he swooned upon that kiss,
There was such heavenly rapture in it,
And lived a whole lifetime of bliss
In one brief minute.

* * * * *

There's naught so sweet as "Love's young dream"
In years ago sang some old poet—
We can not tell, but always seem,
Somehow to know it.

THE RIVER OF SUNSET.

FAR up the misty curtain slowly rolls
Above a wondrous scene of twilight dim,
The nearer fore-ground shows the giant boles
Of trees against the mountain's jagged rim.

Outlined against the purple-misted sky,
Dim seen through dusk, there stands a feudal hall;
Still on the air the ghostly banners lie,
Still is the warder on the silent wall.

And lying just above the headlands bold,
A river, on its breast no sail is furled
Or spread, a river glorious to behold,
With blood red tide that girts the twilight world.

A silent river,—ne'er a sound is heard
Of any boat upon its placid wave,
No dip of oar, nor cry of any bird,
No whir of wings where great night-herons lave.

In strange, fantastic shapes the clouds are piled
Upon the farther shore of that red stream,
In many a rock and crag and mountain wild,
Tipped with the dying fires of Day's last beam.

Where was its fountain head, whence does it flow,
This river broadly flowing from the west
With noiseless waves, and whither does it go,
And whose the stain of blood upon its breast?

So

WYCH-ELM.

Softly the light dies out of western skies,
 Slow fades the mountain crag and river's sheen,
Dim are the feudal towers that grandly rise;
 Night drops the curtain o'er the wondrous scene.

BURNING THE OLD LETTERS.

I HAVE brought them from their hiding,
Where they've lain these many years,
And have tried to read them over,
But I cannot for the tears.

Just a few old faded letters
Written in the long ago;
Strange a pile of yellow paper
Should have power to move me so,

For my heart is throbbing strangely,
While like Niobe I weep,
And my hand is all a-tremble
When I touch the musty heap.

With these senseless bits of paper
Memory weaves a magic spell;
With what voices she is calling
I, and I alone, can tell.

But I cannot, cannot read them,
And the time has come at last
When the last tie must be broken
That has bound me to the past.

I will make of them an offering,
I will lay them on the fire;
To the heathen gods devote them,
Make of them a funeral pyre.

Now I lay them on the altar,
And they vanish, one by one,
Leaving but a heap of ashes—
And the sacrifice is done.

MYRA.

WHERE the restless waves of the Ind' Ocean
shine,
Like a giant beaker of foam-beaded wine,
His beautiful eyes all dimmed by the brine,

He sleeps far down where the coral-tree grows,
While over his pillow the sea-flower blows,
And the wandering ship of the Nautilus goes.

Wave-washed are the curls that so oft I've caressed,
And tangled in sea-weed; the lips I have pressed
Are white as the foam that drifts over his breast.

No burning of incense, no masses are said,
No funeral lamp, save the sea-star to shed
A luminous glow at his feet and his head.

No chanting of dirges, no tolling of bell—
The voice of the sea as it sobs in a shell
Is his dirge, and the wave-beat his funeral knell.

There, lulled by the lap of the shimmering wave,
He peacefully sleeps, hearing never the rave
Of the wind as it frets through coral-hung cave.

He sleeps and he dreams,—if the dead ever dream,
If we are the same when we cross o'er the stream,
And our souls are still lighted by memory's beam,—

And I know that his visions are ever of me,
Far down in his bed where the wave washes free
O'er the gold-sanded floor of that Indian Sea.

THE LETTER.

AT last it has come; I am holding
My heart in its foolish unrest;
I sit with it fondly enfolding
My treasure-trove close to my breast.

I have waited so long for a token
To tell me he still thought of me;
At last the long silence is broken
By a message from over the sea.

He has been to the North, to the ice-lands,
He has stood by the blue Galilee;
And now, from the groves of the spice-lands,
He says: "I am coming to thee."

One little letter, my treasure,
My white-winged bird from the sea,
My glad heart is beating a measure
To the tune, he is coming to me.

MY PICTURES.

DID you say you would like to see them all,
My treasures of art? Then come with me
To a little door in a silent room,
I have only to turn a well-worn key,
And memory's door on its noiseless hinge,
Swings open wide at our lightest touch.
Let us enter, for here is the place I keep
The precious pictures I prize so much.

The first is a landscape, passing fair:
A cottage with sloping roof uprears,
And there on the ivied porch you see
Two dear old faces of by-gone years;
With 'kerchief folded across her breast
That is mother, you see, with the snow-white hair,
And close beside her with book and staff,
Is father, asleep in his old oak chair.

The smoke is curling above the roof,
As it lazily curled in the days of yore,
And plum and cherry-tree blossoms gleam
Like drifts of snow round the open door.
Here is the stream where I used to fish,
Yonder the willow beside the spring,
And here is my old canoe, and there
The path that led to the grape-vine swing.

Ah! the dear old home is silent now,
Save when the hooting night-bird calls

From its nest high up 'neath the mouldering eves,
Where the ivy clings to the lichened walls.
In a shadowy house in a city still,
Where the sleepers forever noiseless lie,
Father and mother sleep and dream,
With faces upturned to the far blue sky.

And here is a little pictured face
That is smiling down with eyes of blue—
Hush! surely I heard a pattering sound
As of baby feet; did you hear it too?
Was it only the wind? Yes; that's my boy,
My gold-haired baby with restless feet
That never were tired, and to-day I know
They are pattering about the golden street.

Here is a portrait of comrade true;
A brother with hair in a tawny mesh—
You see some pictures with age are dim,
And some from the painter's hands are fresh—
The one up there with the eyes of a saint,
Is a sister that left me long ago;
And this is the picture that ever seems
The fairest of all, for I loved her so.

“Dead, all dead?” did I hear you ask,
Father and mother and sister fair,
Brother and blue-eyed boy? Oh, no!
They are round and about me everywhere.
They only sleep; at my slightest call
They will waken at once, and come with tread
As light as the fall of feathery down
When the winds are still; they are not dead.

I have other pictures than these, but none
That hang about over memory's wall
Are as dear to me; and the ones I've shown
Are the ones that I prize the most of all.
Like the miser that hoards his treasured gold,
I hoard them and con them day by day;—
But a mist comes up, and my eyes are dim,
Let us shut the door and come away.

DANGEROUS WATERS.

“Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters.”

—EZEKIEL.

THY rowers now have brought thee into dark
Dangerous waters, and afar from shore,
And just ahead the whirlpool eddies, hark!
E'en now you hear its greedy, sullen roar,
Thy onward course is to its circling folds,
Those ripples yonder mark the danger line,
Stop ere it is too late; that caldron holds
The wreck of many a boat as fair as thine.
The roar is nearer; quick! take down thy sail,
And from thy treacherous rowers take the oars!
Back water for thy life! no time to quail,
Or thou wilt never see again the shores
Where friends, foreboding wait, with sad eyes dim,
All powerless now to lend a helping hand,
They only pray, with white set lips, “Save him,
Oh, God! and bring him safely back to land.”

ESOTERIC.

WHEN all the busy world is hushed
By Nature's low, sweet even-song,
And every hill is sunset-flushed,
I seem to gently drift along
Upon a waveless sea of calm,
Where no disturbing tempest blows,
Whose every breath is full of balm
That lulls me to a soft repose.

Sometimes across the tide there sweeps
A wondrous sweet, alluring strain,
Sung by no mortal lips, that steeps
My soul in bliss akin to pain.
And strange perfumes my senses greet,
From some fair island dim, mist-hung,
Not far away, and strangely sweet
As incense from a censer swung.

A tender, half-remembered tone,
Some word, perhaps a laughter peal,
Comes to me when I thus alone,
As sweet as voice of Israfeel,
Or some dear voice I oft have heard
Calls softly o'er the mist-hung wall
And all my senses quickly stirred
Repond to that familiar call.

So near, so near, sweet Heaven! while
My earth-dimmed eyes are blinded so

I cannot see the happy isle
 From which I wandered long ago.
I clasp my pale hands o'er and o'er,
 And stretch my ever restless arms
Toward that half remembered shore,
 That lures me with its mystic charms.

Kindred spirits, I feel you near!
 But I am blind, I cannot see,
Your well-known voices I can hear;
 Oh! loose my bonds and make me free
To tread with you the viewless wind;—
 Come nearer still, and take my hand;
Lead me, oh, spirits! let me find
 Again that memory-haunted land.

BROWN EYES.

THEY peer at me in the evening,
Star-like through the stilly gloom,
When the soft gray shadows of twilight
Are gathering about the room.

In the dewy freshness of morning
They come with the roseate light;
They follow me through the darkness
Down the dream-haunted aisles of night.

If I take up a book to read it,
Straightway two eyes of brown
Are smiling at me from the pages,
Till softly I lay it down

And gaze in the flickering firelight;
The picture is still the same,
I see but the brown eyes dancing
In every fitful flame.

No matter which way I am turning,
The needle still points the pole;
I see but the light that is burning
In the eyes that haunt my soul.

“LITTLE NELL.”

FOLD thy hands, little Nell, little Blossom,
Fold them up in the soft twilight;
And over thy soul's pretty windows
Drop the curtains so dainty and white.

For thee, little Nell, little Blossom,
There will never be any more pain,
And thy tired feet never will wander
Down the long dusty highway again.

Thou wilt rest in beautiful mansions,
Where the babes of the Saviour recline;
For never went up to the angels
A soul any whiter than thine.

And deep is thy memory nested
In our hearts like an innocent dove,
For ah! little Nell, little Blossom,
Thou hast taught us the lesson of love.

“WHEN MY SHIP COMES IN.”

WE stand to-day
By the smiling bay—
Wherever that bay may be—
And never fail
To look for the sail
Of a hoped for Argosy.

From early morn,
When the day is born,
Far into the dim twilight,
We look for ships
Till the tear-drop drips
From the pitying eyes of night.

Sometimes, I know,
When the trade-winds blow,
Safe over the treacherous seas,
Some ships come home
O'er the tossing foam,
Borne in by a favoring breeze.

But wrecks that lie
Where the sea-birds cry,
Outnumber the ships that land
Their precious freight
At the feet that wait
Forever beside the strand.

In deep sea caves,
'Neath the lapping waves
That over the dead men slip,
The sea-weed holds
In its slimy folds
The freight of many a ship.

Sometimes there is found
An outward bound;
But the ships we hope to see
On some fine day
Sail up the bay,
Are coming to you and me.

But the whirlpool mocks,
And the sunken rocks
Of disappointment frown;
And oft in sight
Of the harbor bright
The looked-for ship goes down.

And under the shrine
Of the sparkling brine
Is lying our wealth untold;
And the jewels rare
That we thought to wear
Are down with the yellow gold.

But they who win
When their ship comes in,
Think never of winds that rave;
And little they reck
Of the wave-washed deck
Far down in its dark sea-grave.

FARE THEE WELL.

FARE thee well ! Fare thee well !
Now our clinging hands must sever,
We must part, and part forever,
And no more till time is ended,
Will our lives again be blended:
Fare thee well ! Fare thee well !

Fare thee well ! Fare thee well !
Other friends will be about thee,
Thou wilt learn to do without me;
In the old, familiar places,
Thou wilt walk with stranger faces:
Fare thee well ! Fare thee well !

Fare thee well ! Fare thee well !
Let me take thy hand in parting—
Never mind the tear-drop starting—
In my own again, and fold it,
'Tis the last time I may hold it:
Fare thee well ! Fare thee well !

Fare thee well ! Fare thee well !
Just awhile, through pleasant weather,
Our life boats have kept together,
As adown the stream we're sailing;
Now I pass beyond thy hailing:
Fare thee well ! Fare thee well !

AT LAST.

ONLY a few pale flowers,
Only a darkened room;
Only a shrouded form
Seen through the quiet gloom.

Only a cortege slow,
Only an open grave;
Only a narrow bed,
Where yew and cypress wave.

Only a little mound,
Where dews of Heaven will keep
The nodding grasses green,
When friends have ceased to weep.

THE STROLLING HARPIST.

ONCE an idle singer wandered
Aimlessly about the land,
Stopping where his fancy led him,
Twanging harp within his hand.

'Twas not much, the harp he carried
O'er the meadow lands and dunes,
Like himself a sort of vagrant,
Strung to little careless tunes.

Simple though, it ever faithful
To its master's hand responds,
As they wander on together—
Just two loving vagabonds.

Strolling thus about the country,
Came they to a pleasant swale;
Lying like a dream of beauty,
Fair as any "Tempe Vale."

Wooded mountains semi-circled
Round a little *ville* white;
Like a graceful emerald crescent
Set with flashing jewel bright.

All the glamoured vale was belted
With a zone of palest rose,
As it lay sun-flushed and happy,
In a sort of languid doze.

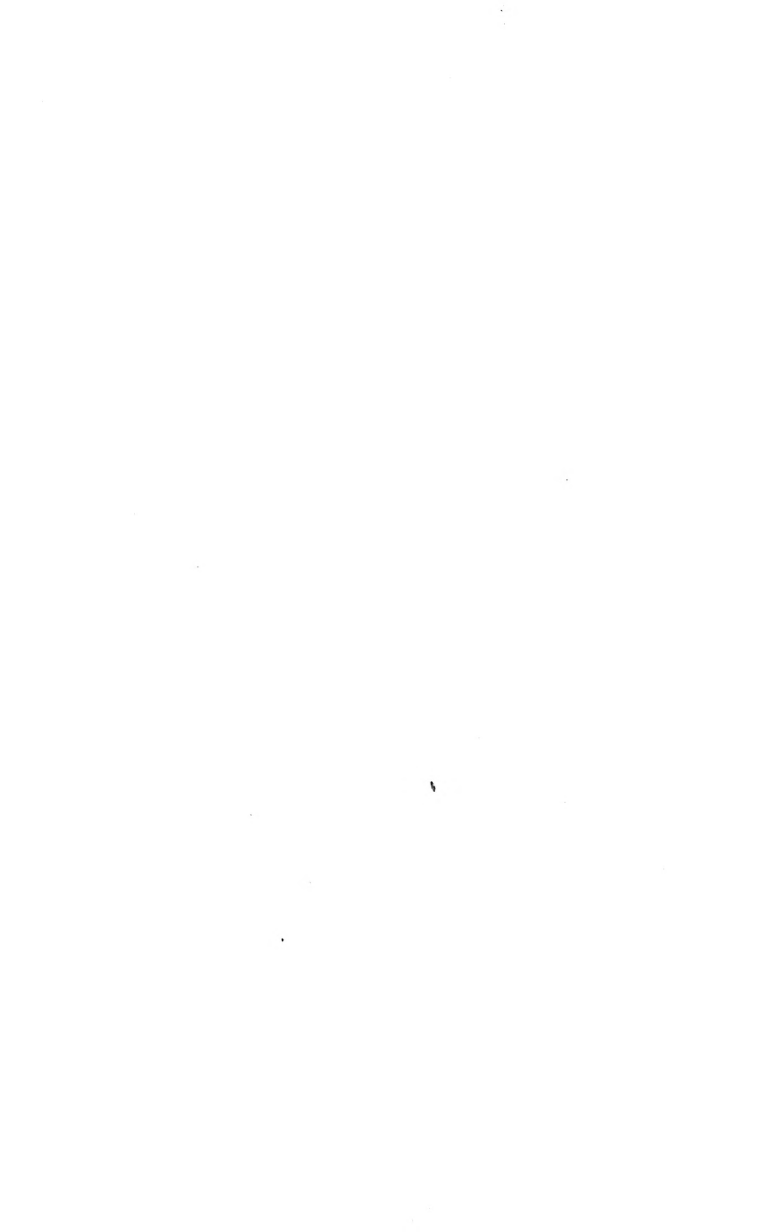
Drifting from the garden's blowing,
Through the passion-laden dusk,
Heavy as the breath of incense,
Came a scent of rose and musk.

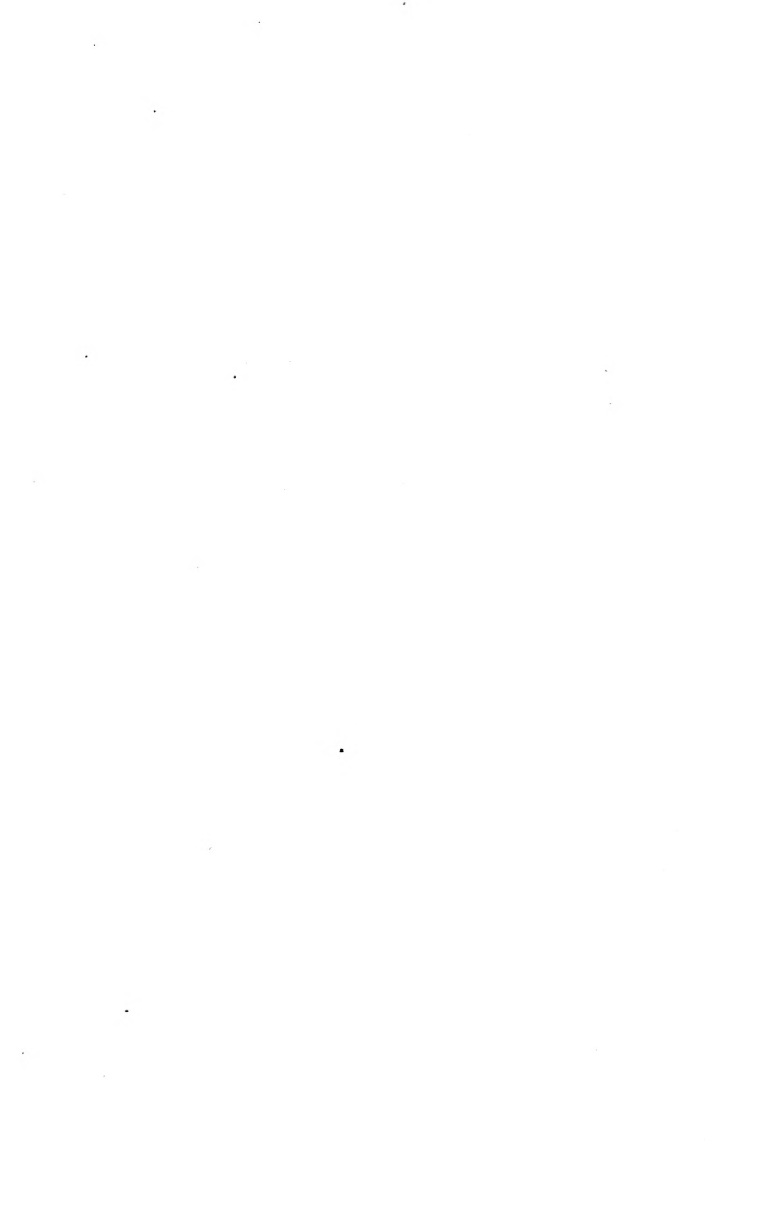
"Ah!" he sighed, "here I will linger;
This is Heaven enough for me,
Here I rest;" then in contentment
Stretched himself beneath a tree.

And the lazy, loving breezes,
Curled his hair in little rings,
Found his harp and softly twanged it
With their airy fingerings,

Sang their siren songs about him,
While they soft, and softer crept,
Pressing down his heavy eyelids
Gently, till at last he slept.

And the tree where he was lying,
Must have been from dreamland bowers;
For the singer still is dozing,
Dreaming through the happy hours.





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